



Kincaldrum Hill

Kincaldrum

Inverrichty

Grange

Glenboy

Haukholm

MEATHIE - LOUR

Halton

+ Inverarity

Inverarity Park

Kerbet

Ovenstone

IMPERARITY

Little Lour

Muir of Lour

+ Kirkbuddo

KIRKBUDDO

Dilly Moss

Carrot Hill

Carrot

1 mile

Meathie-Lour: a parish exploration

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My great-grandfather, William Adam, went to farm at Wester Meathie, three miles south of Forfar, in 1845. He brought with him from his previous farm at Hillock by Kingennie the six volumes of Matthew Henry's *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, presented to him by the Free Church Congregation of Monifieth "as a token of gratitude ... for the acomodation [*sic*] and kindness bestowed upon them since the disruption". When the minister of Monifieth and many of his parishioners came out in 1843 they had no site for a church, and for four years worshipped in a wooden "tent", with seating for 600 faithful.¹ Their new church (still shown on Ordnance Survey maps) was eventually built in 1847 amongst the fields where my great-grandfather had given them a temporary home.

At Wester Meathie, where he died in 1852, William Adam was just two miles from another new Free Church, at Kinnettles, designed to serve the parishes of Kinnettles, Glamis and Inverarity. One of his sons, William, subsequently worked the farm until his death in 1891, while another, Robert, had a lease of the farm of Ladenford, on the adjacent Lour Estate, from 1863 until his death in 1928. Thereafter Robert's widow Elizabeth and son James maintained the tenancy until 1963. His youngest daughter Margaret, my aunt, died in 1990, just short of the 149th anniversary of her father's birth. Robert Adam maintained his father's Free Church connections. He was a leading member of Free Kinnettles, and its successor United Free congregation, until its dissolution in 1916. The congregation's pewter communion service – and the harmonium which one of my aunts had played – were then put in his hands for safe keeping. Shortly before her death my aunt passed the service to the Church of Scotland Kirk Session of Glamis, Kinnettles and Inverarity. The harmonium, which I maltreated when

¹ J. Malcolm, *The Parish of Monifieth in Ancient and Modern Times* (Edinburgh, 1910), 115.

young, had, when last heard of, found refuge in an Aberdeenshire church hall.

The parochial structure of this area of Angus has always been complicated. The modern civil parish of Inverarity takes in the upper valley of the Kerbet burn, a tributary of the Dean Water, which itself flows into the Isla and so eventually to the Tay. The Kerbet is no longer named on Ordnance Survey maps, but the parish of Inverarity runs west along the stream for some seven miles from its source in Dilty Moss to its junction with the Spittal burn.² From south to north the parish stretches five miles between Carrot Hill and Fothringham Hill, both over 800 feet high, spilling down the north side of the latter into the flats of the two Meathies, Wester and Easter, which are drained by the Spittal burn. Wester Meathie is some 500 yards inside the parish boundary with Kinnettles to the west. Ladenford, a mile and a half to the east, is 500 yards outside the Inverarity boundary, and lies, with the whole of the present estate of Lour,³ inside the parish of Forfar.

Down to the middle of the eighteenth century muirs and mosses took up a major part of the Angus countryside. Charters and sasines show increasing precision about boundaries from the early seventeenth century onwards, but plough and seeded pasture did not reach these empty spaces on any scale for more than another century. Andrew Gray, goodman of Meikle Lour, bought a large part of the King's Muir outside Forfar in 1605, but 150 years later his Carnegie successor had still not drained and enclosed it.⁴ The earlier settled area of Inverarity parish was restricted to the lower slopes of the hills and pockets of firm ground along the Kerbet and its tributaries. These scattered settlements

² Immediately to the west of the A929 Dundee-Forfar road. On the south bank of the Kerbet the parish extends west for almost a further mile.

³ For clarity, the present-day house and estate of Lour will be referred to in this paper as Meikle Lour.

⁴ Lour Papers, 18 and 19 July 1605, contract between Sir Thomas Lyon of Auldbar and Andrew Gray of Lour. The Lour Papers show that, although changes on the home-farm were advanced by the time of Home's 1767 survey (see below, 43), work on the new farm-house at Ladenford and enclosure and drainage of the ground along the Vinny did not get under way until the 1780s.

fell originally into three parishes, of which two, Kirkbuddo and Meathie-Lour,⁵ have now disappeared inside Inverarity.

Geography has interacted with history here in various ways. At its source between Easter Meathie and Ladenford the Spittal burn reaches a significant, if unobtrusive, watershed. Some of the present-day Ladenford fields drain into the Spittal, but the farmhouse, which dates back to the 1780s, stands on a low ridge from which water runs north-eastwards through Ladenford Den into the Vinny Water, and thence by the Lunan Water to the sea. This watershed was more evident in 1767, when John Home, the later surveyor of Assynt, made a plan of his father-in-law Patrick Carnegy's estate of Meikle Lour.⁶ At that date a small loch (one of many in the area since drained) lay at the west end of Ladenford Den. Just to the east of the loch was the ford across the Vinny which gave the present farm its name.⁷ Before the King's Muir and the smaller muir at the head of the Spittal burn were drained, this was a route of some importance between the county town and Dundee. Although early sources refer in general terms to the "territory of Lour", the present Meikle Lour, which lies outside the Kerbet drainage system, has from a very early date been separate from the barony of Lour and the parish of Meathie-Lour. This anomaly has caused difficulties, notably to Alexander Warden,⁸ which I propose to examine more fully elsewhere.

No ancient ecclesiastical connection is to be traced between Kirkbuddo and Inverarity, which from their earliest appearance were in different dioceses – Kirkbuddo in Brechin and Inverarity in St

⁵ Early sources give both elements of the parish name (Mathynlur, *Pontificale Ecclesiae Sancti Andreae*, ed. C. Wordsworth (Edinburgh, 1885), xvi; Machinlur, *Liber Cartarum Prioratus Sancti Andree in Scotia* [*St. A. Lib.*] (Bannatyne Club, 1841), 35-6; *Mathylur: Charters of the Abbey of Coupar Angus* [*C. A. Chrs.*], ed. D. E. Easson (Scottish History Society [SHS], 1947, i, no. CXII). In later times this was shortened to Meathie. For clarity, this paper returns to the older practice, giving the name as Meathie-Lour.

⁶ See *John Home's Survey of Assynt*, ed. R.J. Adam (SHS, 1960). Home's plan of Meikle Lour is in the Lour Papers.

⁷ The line of the road can still be traced through the Den, across the stream and up over the flank of Lour Hill to the house of Meikle Lour.

⁸ See A.J. Warden, *Angus or Forfarshire*, iii (Dundee, 1882), 423-4.

Andrews. Whether or not Saint Buite, who allegedly restored to life the daughter of King Nechtan of the Picts,⁹ ever existed, Kirkbuddo had become a somewhat shadowy parish by the thirteenth century.¹⁰ There was, however, a church building in 1472, when David, earl of Crawford granted six acres and six cows' grass adjacent to it, with the advowson and patronage, to Sir David Guthrie of Kincaldrum.¹¹ Guthrie made Kirkbuddo into one of the prebends of his new collegiate church of Guthrie;¹² as such it was valued as a parsonage and vicarage of 40 merks on assumption.¹³ Although entered in the earlier Stipend Registers in a group of parishes headed by Mr David Lindsay, minister of Inverarity, by 1590 Kirkbuddo was linked again with Guthrie.¹⁴ The church did not survive, but the connection with Guthrie did. Ochterlony of Guynd reported in 1684 that "the people had a chapel of their own, wherein the minister of Guthrie preached every third or fourth Sabbath day, but it is now ruinous".¹⁵ Alexander Warden, two centuries later, wrote that "the minister of Guthrie has service at intervals of two or three Sabbaths in the Schoolhouse of this outlying portion of the parish, which is from seven to eight miles distant from the Parish Church of Guthrie".¹⁶

By contrast Meathie-Lour, evidence for whose early separate existence is considerably stronger, was merged with Inverarity within a century of the Reformation. Warden believed that there was a union "about the year 1612" and that Meathie-Lour was suppressed in

⁹ *Ibid.*, iii, 394-5.

¹⁰ It is not found in Bagimond's Roll (*Miscellany*, vi (SHS, 1939), 52-3), or in the *taxatio ecclesie* in *Liber S. Thome de Aberbrothoc* (Bannatyne Club, 1848-56), i, 240-1.

¹¹ *Registrum Magni Sigillii Regum Scotorum* [*RMS*], edd. J.M. Thomson *et al.* (Edinburgh, 1882-1914), ii, 1078.

¹² *Ibid.*, ii, 2910, 30 Sept. 1505.

¹³ Scottish Record Office [SRO], E48/1/1, Book of Assumption, fo. 355r.

¹⁴ SRO, E47/5, Register of Assignations and Modifications of Stipend [Stip. Reg.], 1590, fo. 20v.

¹⁵ J. Ochterlony of Guynd, Account of the shire of Forfar, in *Miscellany*, i (Spottiswoode Society, 1844), 346.

¹⁶ Warden, *Angus*, iii, 394.

1667.¹⁷ Whatever the truth of this precision, he was wrong in believing that “the Lour portion which then belonged to Meathie was, it is said, added to the parish of Forfar”.¹⁸ He was in error for two reasons: firstly, because the lands now known as Little Lour went with Meathie-Lour into the new joint parish; and secondly, because the present-day Meikle Lour, including Ladenford, had older connections with Restenneth, the parish which became Forfar after the Reformation.¹⁹

Bishop David de Bernham of St Andrews consecrated the church of Meathie-Lour in 1243, but an earlier foundation is probable.²⁰ Patronage was gifted to Coupar Angus abbey by Hugh of Abernethy before the death of Alexander III in 1286,²¹ and appropriation followed by a charter of Bishop William Lamberton of St Andrews not later than 1328.²² Fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Coupar leases show that the church was regularly set in tack.²³ Service by a perpetual chaplain was stipulated in Bishop Lamberton’s charter, but the only known sixteenth-century server is Mr Walter Foster, presented to a vicarage

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 400-1.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 401.

¹⁹ John Gray of Meikle Lour, who died in 1575, owed teinds to the Commendator of Jedburgh, of which house Restenneth was a dependency (SRO, CC8/8/4, Edinburgh Commissary Testaments [ECT], fos. 239v-240v). The Commendator had obtained a decret of the Lords for teinds against Gray and others in 1568 (SRO, CS7/43, Acts and Decrees of the Lords of Council and Session [Acts and Decrees], fos. 159r-159v).

²⁰ Wordsworth, *Pontificale*, xvi; the editor argues convincingly that Bishop de Bernham’s numerous consecrations (140 in ten years) were the result of a constitution issued in 1239 by the Cardinal Legate Otho requiring consecrations in proper form with holy oil (*ibid.*, v).

²¹ *C. A. Chrs.*, i, no. CXII.

²² *Ibid.*, i, no. CXII.

²³ *Rental Book of the Cistercian Abbey of Coupar Angus (C. A. Rent.)*, ed. C.T. Rogers (Grampian Club, 1879-80), i, 120, 133, 160-1, 216, 218, 251.

pension of 12 merks by 1508.²⁴ No successor is known, and no post-Reformation reader before John Watson in 1574.²⁵

The only minister of Meathie-Lour who can be said with certainty to have resided in the parish is John Nevay of that ilk, entered in the Stipend Register from 1574 to 1590, who died in November 1591.²⁶ The next definite incumbent²⁷ is Mr David Williamson, who became minister in 1601, and not later than 1607 was also minister at Inverarity.²⁸ Williamson was accused in 1612 of not teaching at Meathie, suggesting that he lived at Inverarity. Styled “minister at Inneraritie” in 1620, he was translated to Kilspindie in 1622.²⁹ How far the two parishes had become united is, however, uncertain. When Watson’s successor Mr Thomas Rig had an augmentation and new

²⁴ *Ibid.*, i, 274; *C. A. Chrs.*, ii, 140. For Foster see *RMS*, iii, 80, 417: he was a witness at Guthrie, 1501 (SRO, GD188, Guthrie Papers 14/15, 24 April 1501), and acted as a notary public, 25 August 1540 (Murthly Castle Muniments, titles of Little Lour (MCM/LL): see SRO, GD121/3/39-44, 25 August 1540.

²⁵ SRO, E47/1, Stip. Reg., 1576, fo. 27v. Dr F.D. Bardgett, in Appendix A:1 to his unpublished doctoral thesis (“Faith, families and faction: the Scottish Reformation in Angus and the Mearns” (1987)), dates his appointment to 1574.

²⁶ For ministers of Meathie-Lour see *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticanæ [Fasti]*, ed. H. Scott (new edn., Edinburgh 1915-50), v, 294. Mr James Fotheringham is recorded as minister at Inverarity, Meathie and Kinnettles in 1567 (*Register of ministers, exhorters and readers* (Maitland Club, 1830), 14), when John Nevay held the same position at Newtyle, Nevay and Eassie (*ibid.*). For John Nevay at Meathie-Lour see: SRO, E47, Stip. Reg., 1, 1576, fo. 27v; 2, 1579, fo. 25r, 1580, fo. 26r; 3, 1585, fo. 18r, 1586, fo. 21r; 4, 1588, fo. 25r, 1489, fo. 23r; 5, 190, fo. 23r: for his testament see SRO, CC8/8/24, ECT, fos. 240r-241v.

²⁷ There is no entry for Meathie-Lour in the 1591 Stipend Register. A testamentary reference in 1596 suggests that Mr James Rait of Kinnettles may have had some authority in the parish (SRO, CC8/8/29, ECT, fos. 389r-390r). Mr James Bannerman appears fleetingly as minister in 1599 (E47/8, Stip. Reg., 1599, fo. 18v).

²⁸ He was minister of Meathie-Lour in 1601 (SRO, E47/8, Stip. Reg., 1601, fo. 17v) and of Inverarity in 1607 (E47/9, Stip. Reg., fo. 20r). For his subsequent somewhat turbulent career see *Fasti*, iv, 214. On 21 Nov. 1616 the Privy Council found that he had attacked Thomas Kininmonth, keeper of the wood of Inverarity, “with a white wand”, and fined him £8 (*Register of the Privy Council of Scotland [RPC]*, edd. J. H. Burton *et al.* (Edinburgh, 1877-), x, 660).

²⁹ The testament of his successor at Inverarity, Mr William Rig (who died in 1656), shows that he had paid Williamson or his executors 300 merks for Inverarity manse (SRO, CC3/3/6, Brechin Commissary Testaments (BCT), fos. 15r-24v).

locality of stipend drawn up in 1635 he was specifically called minister of Meathie, and the locality covered that parish only.³⁰ The past was certainly tenacious, if only in a bureaucratic sense. The parish of Meathie-Lour was still referred to in a Lour title of 1670, and the hearth tax returns of 1691, while treating Inverarity and Meathie-Lour as one, still gave both names.³¹ As late as 1725 the new parish was styled "Meathie and Inverarity" in a decret of modification of stipend.³²

Was there, physically speaking, a kirk of Meathie-Lour in the seventeenth century? Timothy Pont's map of Angus,³³ which is somewhat confused in this area, shows nothing, but there was certainly a building of some kind in 1617, when Alexander Butchart in the Milntoun of Easter Meathie asked to be buried there.³⁴ There is, Lady Carnegie tells me, a Meikle Lour tradition that stones from Meathie kirk were used in the building of the garden wall of the "big house", which I am inclined to date around 1630.³⁵ Ochterlony, towards the

³⁰ SRO, TE5/232, Teind Papers, 4 Dec. 1635 (decret of augmentation, 17 July 1634). It is of course possible that similar arrangements were made at Inverarity, for which no written evidence survives.

³¹ SRO, RS35/4, Forfar Sasines (FS), fos. 325v-327r, 16 Nov. 1670. SRO, E69/11/1, Hearth-money deponed upon, Forfarshire: 244 hearths were accounted for in the joint parishes, 3 Apr. - 1 Oct. 1691, with 48 individual payers listed.

³² SRO, TE19/36, extracted processes, 9 June 1725.

³³ For discussion of this map see below, 49-50.

³⁴ SRO, CC20/4/66, St Andrews Commissary Testaments (SACT), fo. 292v.

³⁵ Robert Carnegie of Dunnichen, who bought Meikle Lour from the last Gray holder in 1626, gave his wife Isabella Gray a liferent of his manor or place of Meikle Lour *nuper edificatam cum domibus edificiis constructis et construendis infra clausuram eiusdem et integro novo orientali horto* (SRO, NP1/71, Protocol Book of Thomas Wichtane, fo. 268v, 20 Mar. 1632). The old kirk may not have been completely demolished, for an 1811 plan of the baronies of Kincaldrum and Kinreich (see below, 57) contains an inset titled "Methie Chaple", showing a walled enclosure with trees and a rectangular building in the centre. The area is small – one-sixth of an acre – and unfortunately is given no precise location. According to Warden (*Angus*, iv (Dundee, 1884), 60) the seventeenth-century Bower lairds of Kincaldrum built a Catholic chapel near Fofarty (Kinnettles parish), on the west side of Kincaldrum Hill. This may be the building shown on the 1811 plan, but if so its name is puzzling.

end of the century, reported the church as “ruinous and decayed”.³⁶ The kirkyard may have survived longer. In 1634 John Trest in Meathie had asked to be buried there,³⁷ and John Ainslie’s Angus map of 1794 shows a “burying ground” on the hillside above and between the two Meathies. The kirk site still shown near Easter Meathie on the 1946 one-inch Ordnance Survey map (but not since) may reasonably be accepted, the more so as Easter Meathie was also known as Kirkton of Meathie.³⁸

The boundaries of the parish cannot be established with precision. The border with Inverarity south of the Kerbet is unclear, while on the north bank the Park of Inverarity³⁹ is a complication. Careful specification of grazing rights in a grant of c.1200 to St Andrews priory⁴⁰ may suggest that Fotheringham and Lour Hills were once common pasture-ground for a number of settlements. The constituent settled parts of the parish, however, are given in the locality of stipend of 1635, which allocated a total of 400 merks, two chalders of meal, and ten merks for communion elements. Of this James Elphinstone, Lord Coupar, titular successor to the abbot and convent of Coupar Angus, paid 100 merks, and Sir John Blair of Balgillo, tacksman of the teinds of the parish, the remainder. This was apportioned by a contract between Blair and his son Sir William, fiar of Balgillo, and Mr William Rig (called “minister at the kirk of Meathie”).⁴¹ The properties, allocations and heritors were:

Kincaldrum and Meathie Lour: 200 merks: laird of Kincaldrum
 Wester Grange of Kinreich, mill-lands, and part of Easter Grange:
 100 merks: Alexander Bower, burgess of Dundee
 Part of Easter Grange: 5 bolls: John Mitchelson

³⁶ Ochterlony, *Forfar*, 323.

³⁷ SRO, CC20/4/9, StACT, fos. 18r-18v.

³⁸ SRO, RS34/1, FS, fos. 198r-201r, 5 Mar. 1639 (“Eister Methie Lour vulgarly called Kirkton of Methie”).

³⁹ See below, 50.

⁴⁰ *St A. Lib.*, 276.

⁴¹ SRO, TE5/232, Teind Papers, Methy Lour, contract of locality, 22 Nov. 1635; *ibid.*, decret, 4 Dec. 1635.

Waulkmill of Kinreich: 10 merks (communion element money):
David Thomson

Glenboy: 10 bolls: John Scrymgeour and Alexander Wauch

Easter Meathie and Kinreich: 17 bolls: John Nevay of that ilk

This list can be set against the information given by Timothy Pont, who at some date close to the end of the sixteenth century drew a 'working map' of Angus.⁴² On this he identified properties, and in some cases owners, carefully distinguishing between lairds and goodmen.⁴³ Kincaldrum (laird of Guthrie⁴⁴) and Kinreich are shown some distance south of the Kerbet, with the miln of Kinreich, Glenboy, Waulkmiln and Grange closer to the river bank. Easter Meathie ("laird of Neif") and Wester Meathie (goodman of Kynninmonth) are placed on the north side of the present Fotheringham and Lour hills. The mapmaker, however, got himself into a tangle by giving too much space to the Park of Inverarity, which he also placed too far downstream, distorting the line of the Spittal burn. Symbols indicate that Kincaldrum, Kinreich, Wester Meathie and Easter

⁴² National Library of Scotland, Pont Maps, no. 26. This map appears to have been made up from sketches on a number of separate sheets, subsequently pasted together, but with some discontinuity at the overlaps. The kirks of Kirkbuddo and Inverarity are shown, but not that of Meathie-Lour. For Pont's maps see J.C. Stone, *The Pont Manuscript Maps of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1989).

⁴³ Contracted to "la. of" and "g. of" respectively. For Pont's use of abbreviations see Stone, *Pont Maps*, 11-12. My interpretation of these, as used in the area of this study, is based on the fact that "laird" is frequently used in contemporary testaments and witness-lists to designate the holders of Kincaldrum and Easter Meathie, but not those of Wester Meathie and Meikle Lour. Eupham Strachan, widow of William Kininmonth of Wester Meathie, is called "goodwife" in 1592 (SRO, CC8/8/24, ECT, fos. 240v-241r): Andrew Gray of Lour is "goodman" in 1587 (*ibid.*, CC8/8/17, fos. 211r-212r), and his father John Gray's widow Bessie Auchinleck is 'goodwife' in 1606 (CC20/4/4, StACT, fos. 106v-107r).

⁴⁴ David Guthrie of Kincaldrum was served heir to his father Alexander, 10 Nov. 1558, and was succeeded by his own son Alexander, 27 Apr. 1598 (MCM/LL: "Inventar of the writts and evidents of the Lands of Loure commonly called Litle Loure ... disponded be David Earle of Northesk to David Fotheringame of Pourie ", 12 May 1694).

Meathie are “houses”, the first and the last being “tower-houses”.⁴⁵ An overlap between two sheets partially obscures a further house – Little Lour, on the north side of the Kerbet, roughly half-way between the stream and the house of Meikle Lour.

The Coupar abbey temporality in Meathie-Lour parish went back to the start of the thirteenth century.⁴⁶ Before 1202 one David the Red gave to the abbey a davach-land of Kinreich and in increment a part (a tenth of two davachs) of the territory of Lour.⁴⁷ Alexander Warden thought that Meathie (presumably meaning both Easter and Wester Meathies) must also have been gifted to the abbey, but this is erroneous.⁴⁸ The increment given by David was relatively small, carrying only one-fifth of the forinsec service laid on Kinreich. Boundaries of the increment are given, which are not easy to interpret, but show that marches already existed between Lour, Meathie and Inverarity. The best sense I can make of the text is that the increment lay on the south-west side of Fothringham Hill, running down to the Kerbet in the neighbourhood of the present Inverarity church, across the stream and upstream from the Grange of Kinreich. A confirmation of 1297-1304 by the then lord of the barony of Lour ratified the grant of Kinreich but made no mention of the increment. As “the enclosure of the park of Inverarichtie”, which Timothy Pont shows in the general area where the increment had lain, was specifically reserved, it is reasonable to assume that at some time in the thirteenth century the abbey had lost this part of David the Red’s gift.⁴⁹ The temporality was thereafter limited to Kinreich – or, more accurately, to that part of Kinreich which David had given.

⁴⁵ If not on the scale of Finavon Castle, to which Pont gave at least six storeys.

⁴⁶ For the Coupar temporality see *C. A. Chrs.*, i, xxvii-xxxvi.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, i, nos. X, XI.

⁴⁸ Warden, *Angus*, iii, 418.

⁴⁹ *C. A. Chrs.*, i, no. LXV. The park was still in existence in the seventeenth century, being shown on Timothy Pont’s map, and having a “keeper and forester” in 1616 (*RPC*, x, 660).

Over 40 late-medieval Coupar land leases relating to Meathie-Lour parish are on record,⁵⁰ from which it is possible to recover the tenurial pattern. Although the name Grange of Kinreich appears frequently, there is absolutely no evidence of a surviving Cistercian grange system. The Grange of Kinreich comprised arable lands, a corn-miln and a waulk-miln⁵¹ on the banks of the Kerbet, all given out on short tack for rents in money and kind, with some services. In the 1460s the arable lands were divided into thirds (of which Glenboy was one). By the 1540s the thirds had been divided, so that there were four parts “lyand on ye south half of the burn”, and two parts of Glenboy on the north; the waulk-miln also was regularly divided. Apart from the parish kirk itself, there were no other Coupar properties in the parish.

What happened to these lands after the Reformation? In 1559 Donald Campbell, last abbot of Coupar, gave a feu-charter of Grange of Kinreich and Glenboy to Thomas Kennedy, fiar of Coiff.⁵² Royal charters of 1596/7⁵³ show that by then most of the sitting tenants of the Grange had exchanged one “master of the ground” for another. Of the four quarters of the Grange proper, the western two were now held by John Lyon, apparent of Cossins (Glamis parish), to whom the king gave a feu-ferme title. Lyon had another feu-ferme charter of the most easterly quarter, where the heirs of James Butchart (seen in 1587 still paying mails to the abbot – more accurately, commendator – of Coupar⁵⁴) resigned their kindness to him.⁵⁵ Only the fourth quarter kept clear of this take-over. Walter Mitchelson, son of John Mitchelson, had a grant from Commendator Leonard of Coupar in 1574, and was still there to have it confirmed by the crown in 1597.⁵⁶

⁵⁰ For Coupar leases see *C. A. Rent*. The Coupar evidence is set in a wider context in Dr. Margaret Sanderson’s important *Scottish Rural Society in the Sixteenth Century* (Edinburgh, 1982).

⁵¹ The *molendinum fullonicum in territorio suo de kyncrey* appears in *C. A. Chrs.*, i, no. LX (c.1260).

⁵² *RMS*, iv, 1380.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, vi, 460, 515-6, 531, 541.

⁵⁴ SRO, CC8/8/17, ECT, fos. 211r-212r.

⁵⁵ *RMS*, vi, 541.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, vi, 531.

A testament of 1634 shows Walter Mitchelson (possibly a son of the preceding) dying in debt,⁵⁷ but another John Mitchelson appeared in Easter Grange in the 1635 locality, and was still in possession in 1656.⁵⁸ Called Grange Mitchelson or Middle Grange, the quarter was still valued separately in 1724.⁵⁹

The waulk-miln and Glenboy were also separate. The miln, now called "of Glenboy", for which David Thomson was assessed to pay ten merks in 1635, had come to him by marriage in 1611 with the daughter of William Walker, himself probably the son or grandson of either Richard or John Walker, tenants in 1542⁶⁰ and recipients of new leases in 1550.⁶¹ Technically, the grant in 1611 was in feu-ferme from the commendator of Coupar, and was converted into royal feu-ferme as late as 1634.⁶² Thomson's son David was retoured as his father's heir in 1655,⁶³ but may have held only part, as he is described as "portioner" in Mr William Rig's testament in the following year.⁶⁴ Like Grange Mitchelson, the waulk-miln was valued separately in 1725.⁶⁵ At Glenboy Adam Wauch and John McFarlan each held half in 1542;⁶⁶ both, with their wives, had new leases in 1550, with provision for one heir-male.⁶⁷ David Kennedy, son of Thomas of Coiff, sold title to half of Glenboy to Patrick Wauch in 1569, on which Wauch collected a royal feu-ferme charter in 1597.⁶⁸ Archibald McFarlane, son of the tenant in 1550, had a similar charter,⁶⁹ but sold his half to Mr James

⁵⁷ SRO, CC20/4/9, StACT, fos. 37v-38r.

⁵⁸ When he owed Mr William Rig six bolls meal towards his stipend (SRO, CC3/3/6, BCT, fos. 15r-24v).

⁵⁹ SRO, TE19/36, extracted processes, 9 June 1725. Accompanying calculations based on apportionment of the valued rent of 1718 show the names still in use.

⁶⁰ *C. A. Rent.*, ii, 201.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, ii, 81-2.

⁶² *RMS*, ix, 77.

⁶³ *Inquisitionum ad Capellam Regis Retornatarum ... Abbreviatio (Retours)*, ed. T. Thomson (1811-16), i, Forfar, no. 353.

⁶⁴ SRO, CC3/3/6, BCT, fos. 15r-24v.

⁶⁵ SRO, TE19/36, extracted processes, 9 June 1725.

⁶⁶ *C. A. Rent.*, ii, 201.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, ii, 82, 86.

⁶⁸ *RMS*, vi, 515.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, vi, 516.

Fotheringham of Ballumbie in 1601 (with a royal confirmation in 1607).⁷⁰ McFarlane's charter cautiously specified that tenure should be either by blench-ferme from him or feu-ferme from the commendator and convent of Coupar. In 1635 there was still a Wauch in Glenboy, but Fotheringham had been replaced by James Scrymgeour. The two holdings were still separate in 1656,⁷¹ but by 1725 had, with all of the Grange except the Mitchelson portion, become part of the estate of Invereighy.⁷²

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, vi, 1892.

⁷¹ SRO, CC3/3/6, BCT, fos. 15r-24v.

⁷² SRO, TE19/36, extracted processes, 9 June 1725. Invereighy in Kinnettles parish, which marched with Grange of Kinreich, was held until 1614 by the family of Balbirnie, who then sold to Sir Peter Young of Seatoun, almoner to James VI (*RMS*, vii, 1071). Young's daughter took Invereighy with her in marriage to Mr Thomas Lyon, son of John of Cossins, who sold it in 1630, together with his lands in the Grange, to Alexander Bower, merchant burgess of Dundee (*RMS*, viii, 1516), under whose name the Grange lands appear in the 1635 locality. The penetration of the Kerbet valley by Alexander Bower and his family has some parallels to that of their nineteenth-century successors, the Baxters of Kincaldrum (Warden, *Angus*, iii, 413-4). In 1630 Alexander Bower elder acquired the Grange of Kinreich heritably and Invereighy as a liferent, with the fee going to his eldest son James, who subsequently married Marjorie Balfour (SRO, RS34/2, FS, fos. 495v-498v, marriage contract, 9 March 1632). In 1639 the elder Alexander bought Easter Meathie and Kinreich from John Nevay of that ilk (SRO, RS34/1, fos. 198r-201r). James Bower predeceased his father, who made over Invereighy and the Grange of Kinreich to his son's two daughters Jean and Grisel, with a liferent in Invereighy to their mother (SRO, RS34/2, fos. 495r-498v, *novodamus*, 4 June 1647: by the marriage of Grisel Bower these lands passed to the family of William Gray, sheriff-clerk of Forfar). James Bower was dead by 9 March 1642, when his father gave the Kinreich lands bought from John Nevay to his *nepos* Alexander, James's son, with entail to James's younger brothers, but keeping his own liferent (SRO, RS34/2, FS, fos. 216r-218v). Later in the same month the old laird made over Easter Meathie to his second son, Alexander (SRO, RS34/2, FS, fos. 224r-225v). Alexander *nepos* does not appear to have had children, for on 13 June 1650 the elder Alexander gave a clare constat declaring that his grandson had died seised of Kinreich, and that his own second son, Alexander of Easter Meathie, now dean of guild in Dundee, was the nearest heir of tail and provision (SRO, RS34/3, FS, fos. 283r-284v). Alexander of Easter Meathie subsequently married the widow of Alexander Gordon of Kincaldrum (see below, 56), from whom he had a charter of Kincaldrum on 8 July 1667, while his own father was still alive (SRO, RS35/7, FS, fos. 274r-275v). Another son of Alexander Bower of Invereighy, Patrick, acquired Wester Meathie

Meathie-Lour parish contained two other pieces of church-land. Charter evidence confirms Timothy Pont's separation of Kincreich from the Grange of Kincreich. At an unknown date one quarter of Kincreich proper passed into the hands of the Knights of St John, possibly as successors to the Knights Templar. David the Red's original grant to Coupar was given when about to go on crusade, which may suggest a date for this gift to one of the Military Orders also. The Hospitaller rental of 1539-40 showed holdings in Kincreich, Kincaldrum and the neighbouring Balmashanner and Craignathro.⁷³ Like most of the 67 named Hospitaller holdings in Angus, these were small shares of lay estates, but the Kincreich "templeland" is slightly less shadowy than the others. In 1498 it was sold by John Kyncreich, son and heir of Laurence Kyncreich, to Sir Alexander Guthrie of that ilk.⁷⁴ The grant was repeated by Preceptor George Dundas in 1529 to Andrew Guthrie of that ilk, presumably on his coming-of-age and succession to his father and grandfather killed at Flodden.⁷⁵ The formalities of tenure were long preserved, as shown by a written discharge for the feu-mails of 1603.⁷⁶ Last in importance, if possibly first in date, were three acres in Little Lour, gifted to St Andrews priory by Adam, son of Abraham of Lour.⁷⁷ This gift in free alms was remembered on the eve of the Reformation, when David Guthrie of Kincaldrum went to the trouble of getting a feu-ferme charter and sasine from the commendator and priory.⁷⁸

Grants to the church in Meathie-Lour parish were all, it will be noted, of early date. After the middle of the thirteenth century benefactions appear to have dried up. All the remaining lands in the

and subsequently Kinnettles (see below, 59). Behind the bare legal outline must lie a complex struggle for family survival in a difficult age.

⁷³ *The Knights of St John of Jerusalem in Scotland*, ed. I.B. Cowan, P.H.R. Mackay, A. Macquarrie (SHS, 1983), 203-5.

⁷⁴ SRO, GD188, Guthrie Papers, 1/3/2, 2 Feb. 1498; see also *ibid.*, 14/15/26 Feb. 1498 and 1 Mar. 1498.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 1/3/5, 19 Jan. 1529.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 14/15, 15 Feb. 1604.

⁷⁷ *St A. Lib.*, 276. David the Red, to whom Adam also granted land (see below, 62), was a witness to this grant.

⁷⁸ MCM/LL, charter, 30 Oct. 1559; *ibid.*, sasine, 11 Apr. 1561.

parish were in their origins parts of a single lay barony. As late as the 1635 locality that unity was still very apparent, with only two holders – the laird of Kincaldrum and John Nevay of that ilk – being named.

The early history of the barony of Lour is too complex to be examined here, and a starting-point is therefore taken in 1464, when Mr David Guthrie, royal Treasurer, acquired it from George, earl of Rothes.⁷⁹ He resigned it in 1472 to his son Sir Alexander, who secured a royal charter giving the barony a new *caput* at Kincaldrum.⁸⁰ Kincaldrum was an acquisition, in Guthrie hands since at least 1450,⁸¹ and the transfer of baronial title to it underlined the new importance of the family.

The component parts of the barony are set out in a charter of 1508, by which Sir Alexander Guthrie, styled of that ilk, granted the fee to his son Alexander.⁸² They are unchanged in another of 1615, when David Guthrie gave the fee to his son Alexander and his intended wife, Marion, daughter of Sir William Graham of Claverhouse.⁸³ As listed in the latter year, the barony lands in Meathie-Lour parish were: Kincaldrum itself; the dominical lands of Lour; the three St Andrews acres in Little Lour; Muirton; half of Wester Meathie; the tenandries of Easter Meathie, Kinreich, half of Wester Meathie, and a quarter of Lour. Two parts lay outside the parish: half of Carrot (Inverarity parish) and the tenandry of Nevay (Nevay parish).

⁷⁹ *RMS*, ii, 814.

⁸⁰ MCM/LL, Great Seal charter, 25 Sept. 1472 (not in *RMS*); *ibid.*, sasine, 21 Oct. 1472.

⁸¹ Mr Alexander Guthrie of Kincaldrum was a member of an inquisition into the rights of the citizens of Brechin, 21 Oct. 1450 (*RMS*, ii, 494). Warden, *Angus*, iii, 407-08 states that Alexander of Guthrie had a charter of Kincaldrum from Sir Thomas Wemyss on 20 Apr. 1446, but is confused on the early history of the family. I have not as yet traced this charter.

⁸² *RMS*, ii, 3259.

⁸³ *RMS*, viii, 2116. The charter was subsequently declared true by the Court of Session, despite the loss of the original (CS7/522, Acts and Decrees, 28 Feb. 1643). It was a complex document, providing for not only the bride's terce, but also a liferent for her future father-in-law, another for his wife Catherine Blair, and a third for his mother, Helen or Alice Douglas.

No baron of Kincaldrum is named in the locality contract of 1635. Alexander Guthrie, fiar, whose father had inherited Guthrie itself, contracted to sell the lands and barony to Sir John Blair of Balgillo in November 1633, but no royal charter of confirmation was given until June 1635.⁸⁴ Blair's son, Sir William, dispersed the barony lands in 1643, selling "the mains and manor place of Lour" to John Carnegie, Lord Lour.⁸⁵ Kincaldrum itself went two years later to Alexander Gordon, a younger son of Sir George Gordon of Gight.⁸⁶ Gordon's purchase appears to have been an investment for his minor son and heir George, but by 1657 both had died, leaving no direct heir. Alexander's widow, Liliias Monteith, to whom title to Kincaldrum itself passed under arrangements made before her husband's death, took a new husband, Alexander Bower, fiar of Kinreich, to whom she made it over.⁸⁷ Baronial title appears to have gone tacitly with the land, but it is improbable that much significance any longer attached to it.⁸⁸

Kinreich reached Bower hands by a different route. When the Guthries acquired the "temple quarter" from Laurence of Kinreich,⁸⁹ they were already, as holders of the old barony of Lour, superiors of the remaining three quarters. Called a tenandry in 1508,⁹⁰ these were – and may long have been – in Nevay family hands in 1565,⁹¹ and

⁸⁴ SRO, NP1/71, Protocol book of Thomas Wichtane, fos. 288r-288v, sasine of 6 Dec. 1633 on charter of same date by Alexander Guthrie, to fulfill contract of 29 Nov. 1633. Royal confirmation was given on 27 June 1635 (*RMS*, ix, 323) and two further sasines, one on the "temple lands of Kincaldrum", followed on 6 Mar. 1637 (SRO, NP1/71, fos. 315v-316v).

⁸⁵ See below, 57-8.

⁸⁶ SRO, RS34/2, FS, fos. 320r-322v.

⁸⁷ *RMS*, x, 597, 17 July 1657. For Alexander Bower, fiar of Kinreich, see above, n.72.

⁸⁸ When Alexander Bower of Kinreich and Kincaldrum's son, Alexander, was retoured as his heir on 11 May 1680 the lands listed comprised Kincaldrum, Kinreich, half of Carrot, and an annualrent out of Kirkton of Nevay (*Retours*, i, Forfar, no. 477).

⁸⁹ See above, 54.

⁹⁰ See above, 55.

⁹¹ An instrument of sasine to John Nevay of that ilk, dated 26 July 1565, was produced in the Court of Session on 11 Feb. 1630 (SRO, CS7/433, Acts and Decrees, fos. 101r-102v).

remained so until sold in 1639 to Alexander Bower's father, Alexander Bower of Inverieghy, merchant burghess of Dundee.⁹² The history of the temple quarter is more obscure. It was attached from Alexander Guthrie of Halkerton (Restenneth/Forfar parish) in 1542,⁹³ though we do not know the basis of his title to it. The testament of Katherine Strathachin, wife of John Nevay of that ilk, shows that in 1587 her husband owed William Rynd of Carse (Rescobie parish) 2300 merks for the heritable right to the quarter.⁹⁴ Nevay appears to have made his title effective, for when his heirs sold their lands in Meathie-Lour parish to Alexander Bower in 1639⁹⁵ they included the quarter of Kinreich "formerly pertaining to William Rynd of Carse and deceased John Rynd his son", as well as the remaining three quarters.

Reduced to Kincaldrum and Kinreich, the barony remained in Bower hands until early in the nineteenth century. Its final extent can be seen in a plan of 1811.⁹⁶ The boundaries shown enclose 1091 acres, running south from the Kerbet up on to Kincaldrum Hill, all lying to the west of the present Dundee-Forfar road. The "big house", where my wife's grandmother was growing up while my own grand-uncle was farming on Wester Meathie (though I do not know that they ever met), with the five large and handsome public rooms, billiard and smoking rooms, 16 bedrooms and 11 servants' bedrooms on the lower floor that so impressed Alexander Warden,⁹⁷ has been roofless and empty for many years now, and its name has disappeared from recent Ordnance Survey maps.

Further dismemberment also took place. In 1643 John Carnegie, Lord Lour,⁹⁸ acquired "the dominical lands of the mains of Lour and

⁹² See below, 61.

⁹³ RMS, iii, 3086, apprisement, 9 June 1542. John Nevay of that ilk was a member of the assize.

⁹⁴ SRO, CC8/8/17, ECT, fos. 210r-211r. John Nevay's own testament, four years later, does not mention this debt, but lists fermes owing by five tenants of Kinreich (SRO, CC8/8/24, fos. 240r-241v).

⁹⁵ See below, 61.

⁹⁶ SRO, RHP (Register House Plans), 110, baronies of Kincaldrum and Kinreich, 1811, by John Blackadder and Son.

⁹⁷ Warden, *Angus*, iii, 414.

⁹⁸ Later first Earl of Southesk.

the manor place of Lour".⁹⁹ In 1656 Carnegie, by then earl of Ethie, owed Mr William Rig, minister of Inverarity, 100 merks for stipend,¹⁰⁰ confirming Sir William Fraser's identification of his new lands as the present Little Lour in Inverarity parish.¹⁰¹ Little Lour, it should be noted, did not become part of the barony of Inverarity until 1694, when David Carnegie, fourth earl of Northesk, sold it to David Fotheringham of Powrie, laird of Inverarity.¹⁰²

One apparent anomaly in the titles to the barony of Kincaldrum is to be noted. From at least 1508 these included, in addition to the whole of Lour, one quarter of the same property. Why was a part claimed as well as the whole? A clue can be found in John, Lord Lour's 1643 sasine, where this quarter is described as "formerly pertaining to deceased William Kynninmonth".¹⁰³ Kininmonths are recorded in the area from the fifteenth century. Andrew Kininmonth brought an action before the Lords of Council in 1485 over the lands of Meathie,¹⁰⁴ and John, son and apparent heir of Andrew Kininmonth of Lour, had a charter of land at Ovenstone on the south bank of the Kerbet in 1501.¹⁰⁵ In 1540 William Kininmonth of Wester Meathie resigned a quarter of the lands of Little Lour to Alexander Guthrie, superior, in excambion for the wester half of Wester Meathie.¹⁰⁶ This would appear to be the quarter recorded so persistently in the baronial titles.

⁹⁹ Contract of sale between Sir William Blair of Balgillo and Carnegie, 22 May 1643 (MCM/LL): SRO, RS34/2, FS, fos. 124v-126r, sasine, 22 June 1643. There were conveyancing complications, finally regularised in a post-Reformation royal charter and *novodamus* (RMS, xi, 883, 13 Feb. 1665). Superiority over the two Meathies was included.

¹⁰⁰ SRO, CC3/3/6, BCT, 15r-24v.

¹⁰¹ W. Fraser, *History of the Carnegies Earls of Southesk and their Kindred* (Edinburgh, 1867), i, xcvi. The 1643 contract lists five pendicles, amongst them Muirton, lying around the present Little Lour, between the Kerbet and the boundary of Forfar parish (which is also the southern march of the present estate of Meikle Lour).

¹⁰² MCM/LL, 12 May 1694.

¹⁰³ See above, 57-8.

¹⁰⁴ *Acts of the Lords of Council in Civil Causes*, ed. T. Thomson *et al.*, i (Edinburgh, 1839), 111*.

¹⁰⁵ Fraser, *Southesk*, i, xcvi.

¹⁰⁶ MCM/LL, 25 Aug. 1540.

More than conveyancing conservatism may have been responsible for this. An annualrent of £10 had been gifted to the provost and prebendaries of Guthrie out of the lands of Lour (called the prebend of Little Lour at assumption), and it was important not to have any confusion about the lands from which it could be raised.¹⁰⁷

The 1540 excambion put the whole of Wester Meathie effectively in Kininmonth hands. There was still a Kininmonth there in 1610,¹⁰⁸ but by 1630 possession had passed to Sir Peter Young of Seaton, from whose grandson it was bought in 1664 by Patrick Bower, youngest of the five sons of Alexander Bower of Invereighy.¹⁰⁹ Both tenandry and superiority were included in Sir John Blair's title in 1643 and in John Lord Lour's ten years later, but with what practical effect is unclear. Thereafter they appeared in Northesk retours until 1694, when they were included in the disposition of Little Lour to David Fotheringham of Powrie.¹¹⁰

Easter Meathie, the remaining Kincaldrum tenandry in Meathie-Lour parish, had intriguing links with the tenandry of Nevay, seven miles away to the west in the parish of the same name (now united with Eassie). Guthrie sasines of 1558 and 1598 name the latter more precisely as Kirkton of Nevay.¹¹¹ It was so called also in a liferent sasine of 1639,¹¹² amplified in teind papers of 1649 into "the toun and land of the manss of the kirkton of Nevay".¹¹³ A contemporary heritors' rental of the united parish shows the reason for this precision: the Kirkton lands paid five chalders victual and vicarage dues of 53s 4d, while Nevay "be east and be west the brig", belonging to the Earl of Buchan and occupied by his tenants, paid seven-and-a-half chalders,

¹⁰⁷ RMS, ii, 2910, 30 Sept. 1505. SRO, E47/1/1, Book of Assumption, fo. 355r.

¹⁰⁸ RPC, ix, 653, 7 August 1610, John Kininmonth of Meathie is cautioner for Mr Thomas Lyon, apparent of Cossins, not to harm Mr David Williamson, minister of Meathie and Inverarity.

¹⁰⁹ *Retours*, i, Forfar, no. 193, retour of Sir Peter's son Sir James. SRO, RS35/2, fos. 32v-34r, 17 May 1664 (in which Wester Meathie is stated to be in the barony of Kincaldrum). For Alexander Bower of Invereighy and his family see above, n. 72.

¹¹⁰ See above, 58.

¹¹¹ MCM/LL, 20 July 1553; *ibid.*, 27 Apr. 1598.

¹¹² SRO, RS34/1, FS, fos. 218v-219v, 16 May 1639.

¹¹³ SRO, TE5/220, Teind Papers, Eassie and Nevay parish, 1649-50.

with £4 vicarage dues.¹¹⁴ The history of the Buchan barony of Nevay has still to be fully investigated, but clearly the Kirkton was separate from it.

A family link between the two tenandries is also undoubted. Andrew Neve of Methay is recorded in 1486¹¹⁵ and John Nevay of that ilk in 1511.¹¹⁶ Another John Nevay of that ilk sat on assizes in the Forfar sheriff-court in 1542 and 1556,¹¹⁷ and witnessed a charter on 27 June 1557,¹¹⁸ on which day John Nevay apparent of Nevay and Meathie appeared as a curator.¹¹⁹ How many generations are involved here is unclear, but family continuity and the link between the two Kirktons is clear enough.

With John Nevay apparent we are on firmer ground. Dr Bardgett has traced his church career, as minister at Newtyle, Eassie and Nevay between 1563 and 1572, and at Eassie, Lintrathen, Glamis and Meathie from 1574 to 1590.¹²⁰ He had a substantial stipend, and three readers under him at Glamis, Eassie and Lintrathen.¹²¹ These are the bare bones of a lengthy service in the Reformed Church. In addition, he was a minor laird. First mentioned in 1557,¹²² he had succeeded his father by 1565,¹²³ and died in November 1591,¹²⁴ four years after his wife Katherine Strathauchin.¹²⁵ Their testaments show John Nevay as a laird amongst others of the same. Easter Meathie, where he lived, carried 20 drawing oxen at his death, with stock and crops valued at

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ MCM/LL, titles of Balmuir (SRO, GD121/3/20), 20 June 1486.

¹¹⁶ SRO, RH6/4, Register House Charters, 776, 6 Dec. 1511.

¹¹⁷ RMS, iii, 3086; *ibid.*, iv, 1195.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, iv, 1193.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ F.D. Bardgett, *Scotland Reformed: The Reformation in Angus and the Mearns* (Edinburgh, 1989), 94, and references there given.

¹²¹ His stipend, and those of his readers, can be traced in SRO, E47/1-5, Stip. Reg., 1576-90.

¹²² RMS, iv, 1193.

¹²³ SRO, CS7/433, Acts and Decrees, fos. 101r-102v, 11 Feb. 1630, production in court of sasine to him of Easter Meathie, Kirkton of Nevay, and three parts of Kinreich, 26 July 1565.

¹²⁴ SRO, CC8/8/24, ECT, fos. 240r-241v, testament of John Nevay.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, CC8/8/17, fos. 210r-211r, testament of Katherine Strathauchin.

over £1,400: the “frie geir”, after debts and credits were taken into account, was £1,105 – a respectable, if not particularly large estate. Family obligations are in evidence. In 1587 John Nevay still owed half of the 1000 merks tocher promised when his daughter Elspeth married Robert Durham of Grange’s son Alexander. At his death 500 merks appears to have been outstanding of the tocher brought by his own wife, daughter of the laird of Brighton of Kinnettles. He acknowledged a debt of 500 merks to his son and heir John, and also left him 200 merks to buy an annualrent for his younger brother James. He further directed that his executors account for 700 merks he had administered as tutor to his nephews, sons of Henry Lovell of Ballumbie. Overall, the Nevay testaments do not suggest financial ebullience. The Rhynd of Carse interest in Kinreich cost 2300 merks, but there is no sign of major borrowing or lending. John Nevay advanced a cautious £50 to his neighbour (and possibly sister-in-law) Eufemia Strathachin, goodwife of Wester Meathie, and her son Mr Alexander Kininmonth.¹²⁶ Caution, too, is apparent in his bequests – some small family gifts, £10 to “the maist indigent of the paroche”, and the same “to help to big ane brig ower carbet”. So far as the evidence goes – which is no great distance – the keynotes are respectability and prudence.

The family lands of Nevay of that ilk at the end of the sixteenth century, therefore, comprised Easter Meathie, Kinreich and the Kirkton of Nevay. The history of the family in the seventeenth century requires fuller examination than can be given here, and lies mainly outside the parish of Meathie-Lour. Easter Meathie and Kinreich were inherited by John Nevay’s son and grandson, both also called John. In 1639 his grandson, with the consent of his own son John and the latter’s wife Helen Haliburton, sold them to Alexander Bower of Inverighty, who passed them to his second son Alexander.¹²⁷ The Kirkton of Nevay was named as warrandice, but was kept by the family, Helen Haliburton holding it in liferent after her husband’s death

¹²⁶ Mr Alexander Kininmonth was minister at Inverarity, 1583-5, and at Kirriemuir, 1586-c.1615. See *Fasti*, v, 261.

¹²⁷ SRO, RS34/1, FS, 198r-201r, charter, 5 Mar. 1639; sasine, 3-4 Apr. 1639. For Alexander Bower see above, 57.

in 1649/50.¹²⁸ Her son David, who may have been under age at his father's death, had sasine as his heir in 1656;¹²⁹ with some persistence, Kirkton of Nevay was then described as being in the barony of Kincaldrum, "uthirwayis callit Lour".

How, it may be asked, did the Kirkton of Nevay come to be part of the barony of Lour/Kincaldrum? It has long been known that in 1265 Sir Henry de Neuith resigned into King Alexander III's hands "the land of Lour", while retaining "the land of Neuith".¹³⁰ Coupar charter evidence identifies Sir Henry as Henry of Neuith, son of Adam, and as Henry, son of Adam of Lour.¹³¹ His father, Adam, son of Abraham of Lour,¹³² gave the canons of St Andrews three acres of Little Lour,¹³³ and before 1202 granted land in Kinreich to David the Red.¹³⁴ Meathie-Lour parish was the religious counterpart of the barony of Lour, of which its kirkton remained a part: Nevay was another ancient parish, but its kirkton was detached from the local barony, and belonged instead to that of Lour. It appears probable that the connection between Meathie and Nevay went back to the time of this first-known family of Lour, and that the sixteenth-century barony of Kincaldrum preserved fossilised evidence of the fact. A further possibility arises. A family of the name of Nevay, of sub-baronial status, was in possession of the kirktons of both Meathie-Lour and Nevay in the sixteenth century. Was it a living survival of an older order of things? At present that must be speculation, only to be tested

¹²⁸ SRO, TE5/220, Teind Papers, Eassie and Nevay.

¹²⁹ SRO, RS34/5, FS, fos. 97v-99r, 21 Apr. 1656. The later history of the family is complicated by the career of Mr David Nevay, brother of David Nevay of that ilk's father (SRO, RS34/2, FS, fos. 521r-522v, 9 Dec. 1647). Mr David; a lawyer and sheriff-clerk of Forfar, acquired the barony of Reidie in 1654 (SRO, RS34/4, FS, fos. 220r-221v). A law lord after the Restoration, he took the title of Lord Reidie, but changed to Lord Nevay after acquiring the former Buchan barony of Nevay in 1664 (*RMS*, xi, 646). Confusingly, he assumed the style of Nevay of that ilk. Warden, *Angus*, iii, 208-9 is muddled on the later Nevay family.

¹³⁰ Fraser, *Southesk*, ii, 479.

¹³¹ *C. A. Chrs.*, i, nos. LIX, LX.

¹³² *Ibid.*, i, no. XVI.

¹³³ See above, 54.

¹³⁴ *C. A. Chrs.*, i, no. X.

by deep trawling in the charter evidence for medieval Angus. With Abraham, however, we are, if not at the beginning of the history of Meathie-Lour, well into its patriarchal age. My great-grandfather, fortified by reading Matthew Henry, might well have found the associations suggested worth pondering.

As Dr Bardgett has demonstrated, the Reformation in Angus turned on the convictions of the lairds, without whom little would have moved. Penetrating beyond their level is more difficult. Kirk session records allowed Dr Bardgett to get some way in Monikie parish,¹³⁵ but even so the motivation of ordinary people remains uncertain. My great-grandfather, I am reminded, was a working tenant farmer who gave some sort of succour to reformers and accepted the changes they brought. I also note that when he came to the Free Church at Kinnettles it was being built under a laird's auspices – or more accurately, the auspices of Mrs Harvey of Kinnettles (née Fordyce of Aberdeen), whose family money came from West Indian plantations.¹³⁶ What can we say, though, of his counterparts of three centuries earlier – if they did indeed exist?

Lacking direct evidence on individual cases, we can take refuge in statistics. An examination of 28 surviving Meathie-Lour testaments, given up between 1586 and 1640, shows a broad continuity with the late-medieval Coupar tenantry, a fairly restricted spread of family names, and no enormous concentration of wealth. There are, unfortunately, no surviving Guthrie of Kincaldrum or Kininmonth of Wester Meathie testaments, but those of several Nevays do exist. Charters, sasines and deeds reinforce an impression that the name was scattered through the parish, and that its carriers varied widely in resources and status. It is worth remembering that younger children of second or later marriages could drop down the social scale quite quickly.¹³⁷ John Nevay, minister of the parish, was head of a family,

¹³⁵ Bardgett, *Scotland Reformed*, esp. ch. 7.

¹³⁶ Warden, *Angus*, iv, 57, 65; *Annals of the Free Church*, ed. W. Ewing (1914), ii, 156-7.

¹³⁷ Patrick Carnegie (1653-1723), first laird of (Meikle) Lour, had 22 children by his two marriages. He died heavily in debt as a result of standing caution for his nephew David, fourth earl of Northesk, leaving little to sustain the children of his

perhaps even of a kindred,¹³⁸ and had greater – if not overwhelmingly greater – resources than the great majority of his congregation. For an outside comparison, we may note that he had 20 oxen and £1,442 in goods,¹³⁹ while his neighbour John Gray of Meikle Lour, who died in 1575, had 27 oxen and £616 in goods.¹⁴⁰ Timothy Pont showed Easter Meathie as a more important house than Meikle Lour, and called Nevay a laird and Gray a goodman, which may suggest a sharp awareness of social status and lineage.

Setting apart John Nevay and his wife, some rough classifications may be applied to the remaining 26 Meathie-Lour testaments, though evidence of this kind is not to be driven too far. There were many ways in which testaments could obscure realities. Estates could be inflated by hopeful listing of irrecoverable debts, distorted by tochers received or paid on the instalment system, pushed into negative value by laying creditors' claims on a dead spouse's estate. Goods and gear could be 'creatively' valued, items could be genuinely overlooked, and the "airschipe" could remove major elements entirely.

Nevertheless, something can still be discovered. Of these 26 Meathie-Lour parishioners, 13 had no plough oxen at all; five had five oxen or less; six, all portioners or their wives, had eight;¹⁴¹ and two

second marriage. In 1813 Mrs Susan Carnegie of Charleton met a disabled old blacksmith at Montrose whose grandfather had been a son of that marriage. She appealed to Patrick Carnegie, fourth of Lour, who acknowledged the cousinship, and gave financial help (family notes by the late Col. Carnegie of Lour, presently in Lady Carnegie's possession).

¹³⁸ If so, an occasionally awkward one. On 16 June 1589 John Nevay of that ilk, minister of Meathie, with 16 others (relatives, tenants, parishioners) was required to find caution not to harm Andrew Nevay in the waulkmiln of Glenboy (*RPC*, iv, 396).

¹³⁹ SRO, CC8/8/24, ECT, fos. 240r-241v.

¹⁴⁰ SRO, CC8/8/4, ECT, fos. 239v-240v.

¹⁴¹ SRO, CC8/8/17, ECT, fos. 211r-212r, Grisel Nevay, East Grange of Kinreich: CC20/4/3, StACT, fo. 12r, Christian Walker, East Grange of Kinreich; *ibid.*, CC8/8/3, fo. 181v, Patrick Wauch in Glenboy; *ibid.*, CC8/4/5, fos. 283r-283v, Eupham Ker, East Grange of Kinreich; *ibid.*, CC8/8/6, fos. 395v-396r, David Ker, Grange; *ibid.*, CC8/8/9, fos. 478v-479r, Isobel Myln, Grange.

had more.¹⁴² Seven of the 26 had over £400 in goods and gear, of whom five had eight or more oxen.¹⁴³ Three of these seven estates were in overall debt,¹⁴⁴ and one had a small surplus:¹⁴⁵ the remaining three,¹⁴⁶ with one other,¹⁴⁷ were the only ones in the parish to have free gear of over £300. Of these four “virtuous estates”, three had a roughly similar pattern, with goods and free gear in broad balance, and moneys owed and owing falling well below the figures for goods. John Volum in Kinreich had more oxen than David Ker in Grange or Grisel Nevay in Easter Grange, and also a rather larger free estate – £811 as against £450 and £304 – but the difference is a matter of size rather than scale.

John Butchart at the miln of Kinreich,¹⁴⁸ who died in 1596, may have been a different proposition. He had 13 oxen and goods and gear (mostly sown grain valued at its estimated product) worth £2,117, was owed £103 (mostly borrowed money), and himself owed just £6.6.8 for teinds and fees to two servants (one of them an Adam). His free gear came to £2,214 – twice as much as John Nevay, almost thrice as much as John Volum. It would be rewarding to know where this wealth came from, how John Butchart used it, where it went after his death. He died intestate, and his brother at the miln gave up the estate as tutor to Alexander Butchart, his son; a widow appears to have survived, as the free gear was divided into three parts. If my great-grandfather had any equivalent in the Meathie-Lour of the reformation, John Butchart is as

¹⁴² SRO, CC8/8/29, ECT, fos. 389r-390r, John Butchart, miln of Kinreich; *ibid.* CC8/8/33, fos. 345r-346v, John Volum, Kinreich.

¹⁴³ Eupham Ker, David Ker, Isobel Myln, John Butchart, John Volum. The others were: SRO, CC20/4/9, ECT, fos. 37v-38r, Walter Mitchelson, East Grange of Kinreich, no oxen; *ibid.*, CC20/4/9, fos. 69v-70r, Alexander Myln, Cuttiehauch of Wester Meathie, two oxen.

¹⁴⁴ Eupham Ker, Walter Mitchelson, Alexander Myln.

¹⁴⁵ Isobel Myln.

¹⁴⁶ David Ker, John Butchart, John Volum.

¹⁴⁷ Grisel Nevay, who had eight oxen but only £364 goods.

¹⁴⁸ Tenants of the name of Butchart are found holding Coupar leases in Kinreich and Grange, 1465-1550 (*C. A. Rent.*, i, 153, 159-60, 206, 211, 299; ii, 102, 201, 244, 252). John Butchart, who had a lease of a quarter of Kinreich in 1550 (*ibid.*, ii, 102) had a son James, who was to have a life interest after his mother Agnes Watson's death.

likely a candidate as any. Unfortunately, there is a frustrating reticence about his estate, and absolutely no clues as to his standing, local influence and beliefs.

A proper assessment of parish structure would certainly have to go well beyond the limits of this paper. In one obvious direction, it would have to take account of significant figures in parish life who were neither proprietors nor feuars. Where, for instance, did John Baldovie of that ilk, who died in September 1577, fit into Meathie-Lour? His family land was at Baldovie, a mile-and-a-half inland from Broughty Castle, but he was also a tenant of Kincaldrum land on some scale. With goods and gear of £1,414 and free gear of £1,387, and 24 oxen, he was on any account John Nevay's equal. When he gave up his testament at Wester Lour (possibly the quarter of Lour that William Kininmonth had surrendered in 1540) the witnesses included David Guthrie of Kincaldrum, William Kininmonth of Wester Meathie, and John Nevay himself.¹⁴⁹ It is hard to believe that Baldovie counted for nothing in the parish, and risky to assume that he was the only one of his kind.

In another direction, a full assessment would have to see the parishioners in wider terms. The late Gordon Donaldson suggested that even in the eighteenth century many rural parishes contained fewer than 100 households and 500 inhabitants.¹⁵⁰ The Meathie-Inverarity figure of 244 hearths in 1691 would certainly not contradict this. The testaments I have examined contain in all 126 names (though some double-counting has to be allowed for). Over a period of more than half a century, this is a tiny part of the total parish population, and no firm base for generalisations. However, it by no means includes all the parishioners who could be identified from the surviving record evidence. This first skirmish suggests that a fuller search would be worthwhile. The creation of a national Church that worked at the parish level was the great achievement of the Reformation. A closer look at individual parishes, if unlikely to uncover much directly

¹⁴⁹ SRO, CC8/8/6, ECT, fos. 248v-250r.

¹⁵⁰ Donaldson, *Scottish Church History* (Edinburgh, 1985), 220.

devotional evidence, could usefully deepen our understanding of the society in which that achievement came about.¹⁵¹

¹⁵¹ I am indebted to Baroness Carnegie of Lour for permission to consult and quote from the Carnegie of Lour Papers, and to Henry Fotheringham, Esq., for permission to consult and quote from the Murthly Castle Muniments.

